

Air India International Flight Cuts: Reason Behind Air India's International Flight Cut

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Air India International Flight Cuts Latest News

- Air India has announced major cuts to its international flight schedule from June to August, including an almost 40% reduction in North American operations and substantial reductions in flights to **SAARC** and Southeast Asian destinations.

International Routes Affected by Air India's Flight Cuts

- Air India has removed 145 weekly international flights, resulting in an overall 27% reduction in international operations across multiple regions.

North America Hit Hardest

- North America, Air India's most important international market, has seen a major impact: Weekly flights reduced from 51 to 33 (39% decline).

- Temporary suspension of routes such as:
 - Delhi-Chicago
 - Delhi-Newark
 - Mumbai-New York
- However, Mumbai-Newark has received four additional flights, taking the route to seven weekly services

Europe Sees Moderate Cuts

- Air India has withdrawn about 34% of flights on several European routes, including: Paris, Copenhagen, Milan, Vienna, Zurich, Rome.
- Unaffected routes: London, Manchester, Amsterdam.

Sharp Cuts in Asia-Pacific Routes

- The steepest reductions have been in Southeast Asia, SAARC, and the Far East, with about 57% of flights withdrawn to destinations such as: Kathmandu, Dhaka, Colombo, Bangkok, Shanghai, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City.

Singapore Services Significantly Reduced

- A total of 21 weekly flights from Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai to Singapore have been withdrawn.

Australia Routes Also Affected

- Flights from Delhi to:
 - Melbourne reduced from 7 to 4 per week
 - Sydney reduced from 7 to 4 per week

Why Air India Has Cut International Flights

- Air India's flight reductions are mainly due to the **West Asia conflict**, which has forced airlines to avoid affected airspace for safety reasons, leading to significantly longer routes.
- Travel times to North America have increased by five to six hours, requiring refuelling stops in cities such as Vienna and Copenhagen.
- The situation has worsened for Indian carriers because Pakistan has barred Indian airlines from using its airspace since April 2025, following Operation Sindoor, placing them at a competitive disadvantage compared to foreign airlines such as Lufthansa.

Wider Impact on Indian Airlines

- The disruption is not limited to Air India. Other Indian airlines have also reduced international operations:
 - IndiGo: 21% reduction in international flights in April
 - SpiceJet, Akasa Air, Air India Express: Over 50% cuts, though on smaller international networks

Why Air India Has Been Hit the Hardest

- Air India has faced the biggest impact because it is the **only Indian airline** operating North American routes and has a strong presence across several European destinations, unlike IndiGo, which is still expanding internationally.
- By April, **jet fuel prices had risen by 130%** due to tensions in the Gulf.
- Since fuel accounts for nearly 40% of airline operating costs, this has sharply increased financial pressure.
- Airlines have responded by imposing fuel surcharges and increasing ticket prices, but there are concerns that excessively high fares may reduce passenger demand.
- Air India's network rationalisation is aimed at limiting mounting losses amid operational disruptions.
- The airline reported a ₹26,700 crore loss in FY 2025-26, driven by the Pakistan airspace ban, rising costs, and reputational setbacks after the Ahmedabad crash.

Global Aviation Faces Disruptions and Cost Pressures

- The aviation disruption is part of a broader global trend triggered by regional conflict and soaring fuel prices.
- Gulf carriers have been hit the hardest, with the **International Air Transport Association** reporting a 61% decline in international passenger traffic in March.
- Beyond the Gulf, airlines are cutting operations to manage costs and improve efficiency.
- The Lufthansa Group has cancelled 20,000 short-haul flights until October to save jet fuel and streamline long-haul connectivity.
- Qantas has also reduced capacity, cutting domestic flights by 5% and international services by 2%, while withdrawing some routes such as the Bengaluru–Sydney service despite expanding select Europe operations.

Source: TH

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